

# Town of Essex Economic Development 2026 MID-YEAR UPDATE



In Q1 and Q2 2026, the Town of Essex Economic Development Department delivered a range of initiatives and services that supported local business growth, expanded investment opportunities, strengthened tourism, and promoted the Town as a great place to live, work, and visit. Through proactive business retention efforts and collaborative partnerships, the team advanced strategic priorities that supported sustainable growth.

## Business Retention and Expansion

Business retention and expansion in the Town of Essex focuses on helping local businesses thrive. By engaging directly with businesses and entrepreneurs, our team provides hands-on support and connects them with resources that promote long-term vitality. Through proactive and responsive business retention and expansion initiatives, the team helps ensure local business needs are clearly understood and properly addressed.



**3** ribbon-cutting ceremonies



**1** ground-breaking ceremony



2024 Vacancy Rate  
Essex Centre: 4.8%  
Harrow: 5.1%

**2026 Downtown Vacancy**  
**4.2%** Essex Centre  
**2.1%** Harrow



**25** Businesses directly supported



**3** Investment-ready industrial land profiles created

**Launched the Business Milestone Recognition Program** to recognize business milestone anniversaries.

**To date, no funding has been distributed** through any currently available Community Improvement Plans.

## Grant Funding

Our team actively pursues grant opportunities to secure funding for Town projects and initiatives that strengthen our community, support economic development, and improve quality of life.



**\$278,478**  
In secured funding YTD



**12** Grant applications submitted YTD

## Building Development



**YTD Total Construction Value**  
• Jan-Jun 2026: \$48,060,200.00  
• Jan-Jun 2025: \$32,933,000.00



**2026 Home Sales**  
• Ward 1 & 2: 96  
• Ward 3 & 4: 44



**YTD Home Permits Issued**  
• Ward 1: 24 • Ward 2: 6  
• Ward 3: 10 • Ward 4: 4

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## Tourism

Our team is committed to advancing tourism and making Essex a vibrant destination for visitors. Through promoting local assets, attractions, events, and building supportive partnerships with businesses and community organizations, we are enhancing the Town's tourism and visitor profile.



| Town of Essex Tourism Booth at the 2026 TWEPI Staycation Expo on April 24 and 25

**\$2,000**

In funding distributed to the McGregor Music Festival and the Rotary Club of Essex from the Essex Tourism Events Fund

**2,000**

Tourism brochures distributed to highlight Town attractions and events

**4,748**

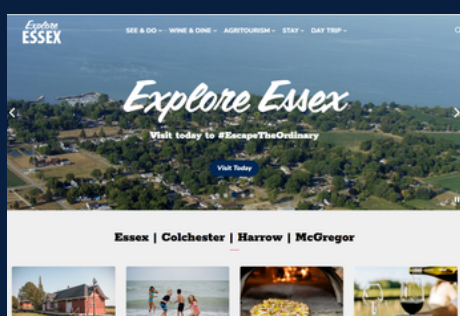
TourismEssex Instagram followers, representing a 2.1% increase in 2026

## A Day in Essex, #WorththeStop

10 curated day-trip itineraries showcasing 55 attractions, including 48 local businesses, were promoted through targeted Instagram and Facebook advertising campaigns to drive visitation and highlight Essex as a destination.



## New Tourism Website



A redesigned, user-friendly website showcasing local businesses, attractions, events, and experiences.

## Main Street Monday Campaign



A weekly Instagram campaign highlighting main street businesses. To date, 11 businesses have been featured.

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## Strategic Initiatives



### **Urban Design Guidelines**

Exploring the development of urban design guidelines for the Town to ensure that the overall approach to revitalization within Harrow and Essex Centre is cohesive, functional, and attractive.



### **Industrial Community Improvement Plan**

Developing financial modelling and analysis to support implementation and consideration of the draft Industrial Community Improvement Plan.



### **Business Concierge Program and Roadmap to Ribbon Cutting**

Advancing the development of the business concierge program and the roadmap to ribbon cutting document to streamline and enhance the development approval process.



### **Naming Rights and Sponsorships**

Administration continues to promote naming rights and sponsorship opportunities through engagement with local partners and businesses. A communications and engagement strategy is currently being explored to garner additional interest for naming rights opportunities.



### **Economic Development Website Updates**

Enhancing the Economic Development website to update information, improve access to resources, and better support businesses and investment attraction.



### **Community and Business Photo Content Initiative**

Updating and expanding the Town's visual content library to support marketing initiatives, tourism, and local business promotion.